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Leaks: They Don't All Come From the Hill

Constant repelition and press coverage of statements by the White House, the Department of State, and officials of the CIA gives the impression that the Congress and its staff are for the most part loose-lipped, irresponsible, unpatriotic dupes whose principle characteristic is to leak U.S. Government secrets so foreign governments may do us in.

Who leaked the Pentagon Papers? Daniel Ellsberg, a former employee of the Defense Department who never worked for the Congress. In fact, Ellsberg peddled the Pentagon papers on Capitol Hill for months trying to find a member of Congress who would leak them. He failed, so gave them to the press himself.

Who leaked the names of CIA agents? Mr. Philip Agee, a former trusted employee of the CIA. He went to London and wrote a book.

Who found it necessary to ask the FBI to bug and tail Executive branch officials and members of the press to stop leaks from the National Security Council? It was President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger, concerned about leaks from the executive branch.

And most recently, who leaked the Moynihan cablegram to Secretary Kissinger, to the New York Times—a

cablegram which will destroy several heretofore useful sources of information for the U.S. Government? It is clear that the leak was executive branch in origin, certainly not the Congress.

This is not to deny that there have been leaks from the Congress. The number of leaks from Congress is about the same ratio as leaks from the executive branch. The executive branch, however, has more secrets to leak, more people to leak them, and a more sophisticated word to describe some leaks—"declassification."

It seems apparent that in recent weeks there is an orchestrated effort to fix sole blame on the Congress for national security leaks. We seem to forget that members of Congress swear to uphold the same Constitution as officers of the executive branch, are subject to the same laws, and once every two or six years submit their performance in office to the judgment of their fellow citizens—a privilege denied the executive branch bureaucracy.

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